ENGRAVINGS TO ILLUSTRATE MR. EASTLAKE'S LETTER TO SIR ROBERT PEEL.

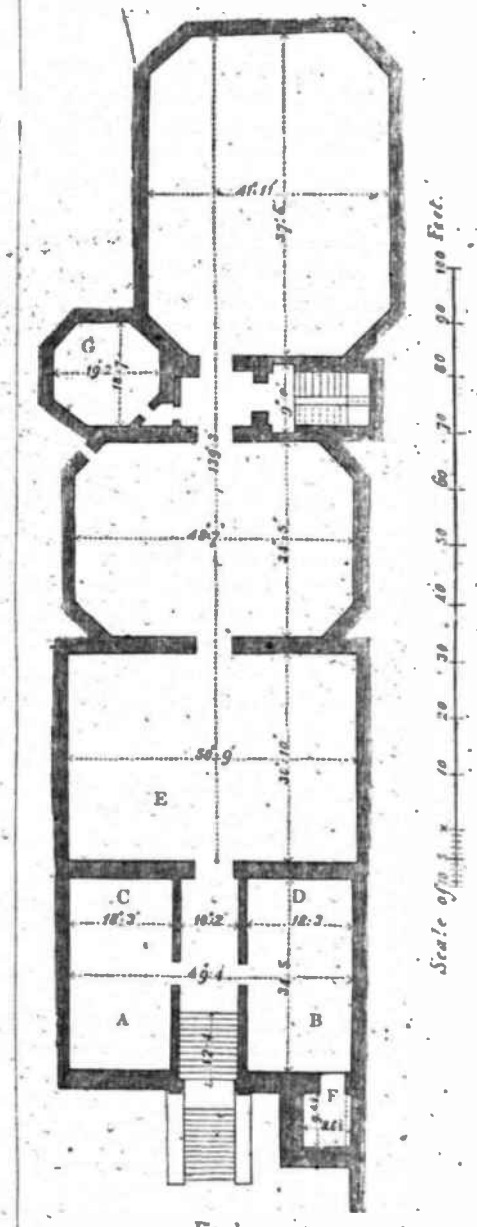

Fig. 1.

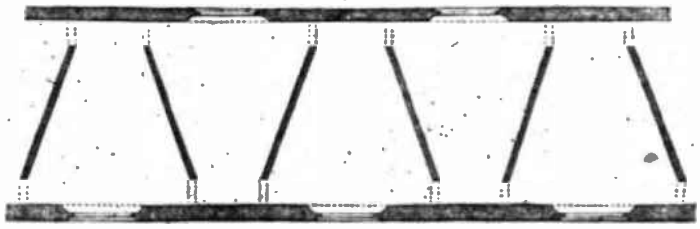

Fig. 2.

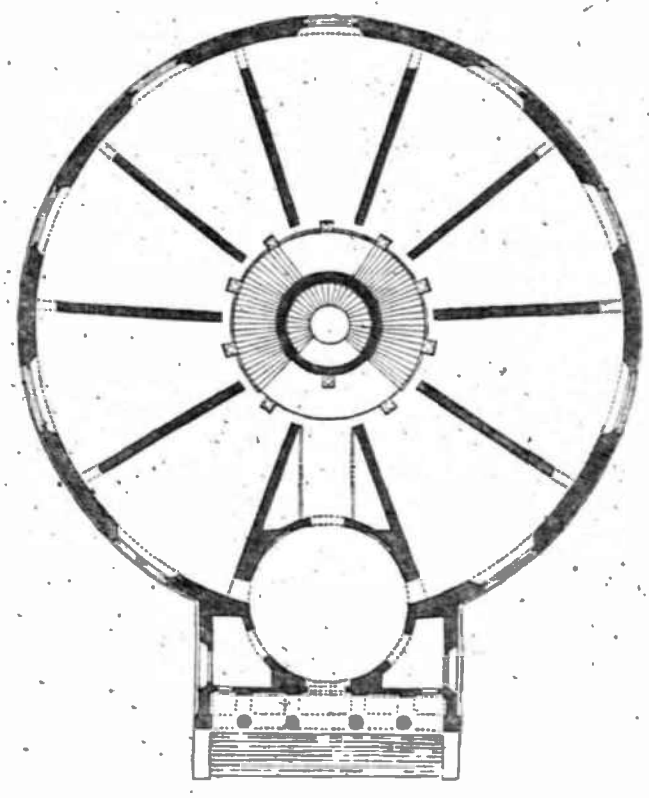

Fig. 3.

ing to efface the upper angles of the room), the greater will be the quantity of light reflected from it. In the new gallery at Munich this advantage, it appears, is more than counterbalanced, in the large rooms, by the great height of the curve itself, which has the effect of removing the source of the light too far from the pictures.

The inference which the foregoing statement seems to warrant is, that rooms of equal height are not advisable for large and small pictures; that, supposing a skylight to be the fittest on all occasions, elaborate cabinet pictures, in order to be near the eye, and, at the same time, near the light (for both conditions are essential), must be placed in less lofty rooms. This, it is admitted, might involve architectural difficulties. The problem of providing high and low skylights on the same floor (if desirable to have them on the same floor) would not be solved by adopting the form of the ancient basilica, or that of a church, in which the nave is much higher than the aisles; for the greater elevation of the central room would intercept a considerable portion of light from one wall at least of the side galleries. The diminution of light from the interruption of over-topping walls and chimneys may be seen in the National Gallery, on comparing the different sides of the principal room; that where the celebrated painting by Sebastian del Piombo hangs is always the darkest, owing to the masses of brickwork above the opposite side. It would appear needless to say that a skylight for pictures should be free and uninterrupted, but the frequent violations of this condition prove that it may be forgotten.

Supposing the rooms to be on the same floor, but of unequal height, the best mode of ensuring the uninterrupted light in the smaller galleries would be to place the latter not parallel, but at right angles, or abutting endwise against the higher building, at the same time contriving that connecting corridors (in which drawings might be placed), should have the effect of removing such smaller galleries still further from the higher neighbouring walls. If, again, the rooms should not be required to be on the same floor, there would be no difficulty whatever in ensuring a perfectly uninterrupted skylight in every case.

The well-known advantage of a skylight is, that the spectator, when near enough to inspect a picture, is not dazzled by the source of the light; the picture is illumined, but the light itself is unseen. There is a mode in which this end can be attained in a great degree, even with a lateral light. It was proposed some years since by Professor Magnus, of Berlin, but I am not aware that it has been anywhere adopted. A paper which he published on the subject at Vienna (in November 1839), contains the plan which is here copied, Figure 2.

He supposes a room so constructed to be at least five-eighths of its breadth in height; its length to depend on the number of paintings to be placed in it; windows, reaching nearly to the ceiling and about five feet from the floor, are opened on both sides. The width of the windows, he proposes, should be a fourth of the breadth of the room, and also of the piers between them; screens are then introduced, placed at an angle of 62° with the wall, as shewn in the plan. The pictures to be placed on the screens require to be removed five or six feet from the wall; the useless space serving for doors of communication.

In such an arrangement it will be seen that the spectator must almost turn his back to the window in viewing the pictures on the screens.

This principle is, unquestionably, best adapted for a circular building, since the oblique screens would then present no archi-

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